

THE FLAGLER MEMORIAL ON MONUMENT ISLAND

History

Its graceful white spire has presided over Biscayne Bay since 1920. Commissioned by Carl Fisher, who co-founded the City of Miami Beach in 1915, it is dedicated to Henry Flagler, the most famous of all Miami-Dade developers. The 110-foot tall statue is arguably the most important public sculpture in all of South Florida. Its colossal obelisk, man-made island, and four larger-than-life allegorical figures, are an enduring tribute to the accomplishments, vision, and faith in the future that have made Miami Beach a premier international destination. Cast as heroic men and women, these values as statues - Industry, Education, Pioneering, and Prosperity - have gazed north, east, south and west for over 80 years.

But what is the future of this symbol of our city? Sadly, the majesty we recognize from a distance fades sharply on closer view. Erosion, weathering, neglect, and even vandalism have taken their toll. Disintegration of its lovingly carved stonework, staining, biological over-growth, graffiti and gouging, and broken or missing, details are all clearly visible from the statue's base. While the obelisk itself appears to be secure, the Flagler Memorial is in poor condition and in danger of imminent demise. "Save the Flagler Memorial Monument" is a public-private fundraising partnership dedicated to the education, restoration, and conservation of this historical landmark.

Sculptures

INDUSTRY

Facing due north, this larger-than-life-size man stands on a pedestal, dressed in a classic Roman toga. He holds a scroll in his left hand, while with his right hand he is clutching a stone building, possibly a factory. Erosion is the most serious problem here, most noticeably on the figure's face, scroll, and his left foot, half of which is missing.

EDUCATION

This female figure, facing east, is wearing a dress with a cape over her shoulders. Her right foot rests on a book and she cradles additional books with her right arm. Her left hand reaches out in a welcoming gesture. Stone loss has exposed rusting rebar where her fingers once were and a deep crack in her cape may soon result in a major break.

PIONEER

Dressed in vintage sailing garb, he gazes to the south, shielding his eyes from the sun. In his left hand he holds a shovel, and he is leaning on a plant, possibly a mangrove. The right arm of this figure is eroded to the point of being a safety hazard, with exposed rusted piping and major cracks in the stonework that are currently being held together with thin wire.

PROSPERITY

Wearing a long dress and a tiara, with her right hand she reaches out to the west. Her left arm holds a cornucopia, and a purse drapes across her chest. The outstretched right arm is in danger of collapse, and it is difficult to tell what she once held in that hand. Further deterioration along cracks in her face may lead to the loss of significant details.

Future Plans

A detailed site survey conducted in September 2000, recommends a conservation treatment program for the Flagler Memorial that will cost approximately \$300,000. The first step is a thorough study of the statue's stonework and construction methods, and research to identify lost details. Work will begin with the removal of old wires and loose or unstable elements, cleaning of all rust stains, dirt, and mold, and repairing of cracks in the statue's stonework with injection mortar.

Using a more stable rebar – either nylon or stainless steel – broken elements will be replaced to restore the monument to its original condition. The entire statue will then be carefully cleaned to eliminate inconsistencies in its overall color. Finally, application of protective coatings will reduce erosion and slow biological growth to complete time-critical restorations.

After that, the future of the Flagler Memorial is truly up to all of us. Ongoing maintenance can prevent or minimize seasonal damage. Public education can help reverse the toll of careless visitors. Most important of all, an unwavering commitment from all of us to keep this sculpture strong and beautiful is the best guarantee that it will always stand for the bright future of Miami Beach.

Save the Flagler Memorial Fundraisers

2001 - Star Island reception with cruise, May 23rd

2002 - The Mirador poolside extravaganza, February 19th

2003 - 14th Street-on-the-bay swim/paddle to Monument Island, (TBD)

Save the Flagler Memorial Members

Diamond	Charles E Smith ZOM South Beach Ltd.
Gold	Garner Foundation Burstein Family Foundation
Silver	Ocean Bank
Bronze	Elaine Bloom Bruce A Davidson Heidi J Eddins Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce Owens Planning & Design
Copper	Dennis Burris Saul & Jane Gross Joy & Fred Malakoff Helen B Shane Bruce & Ronnie Singer

Education

In 2003, a Flagler Memorial public viewing site will be situated at the 14th Street end off of West Avenue where it meets the bay. This newly landscaped streetend offers parking, turnaround, a pedestrian walkway and waterfront viewing in close proximity to Monument Island. Two non-coin operated binoculars and a bench will be installed to provide an opportunity to view and enjoy the Flagler Memorial on Monument Island from land.

Information

City of Miami Beach
Department of Tourism and Cultural Development
Art in Public Places
305-673-7577